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1921

MANY CHILDREN

MRS. SCHUYLER VAN RENSSELAER

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MANY CHILDREN

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BY

Mrs. SCHUYLER VAN RENSSELAER

WITH DRAWINGS BY

FLORENCE WYMAN IVINS

J'étais là; cette chose m'avint

LA FONTAINE

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TO MY YOUNG KINSFOLK

MARY AND LOUISA, GEORGE AND JOHN

AND MY FRIEND

BARBARA

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MANY CHILDREN

THE SMALLEST ONES BEGIN THE BOOK,
THEN, AS YOU TURN THE PAGE
OR DOWN THE LIST OF TITLES LOOK,
THEY GROW AND GROW IN AGE

THE WIND

Oh, I wish I knew!
What does the wind do,
Where does the wind go,
Mother, when it does not blow?

In the leafy trees
Does a little breeze
Live till it can grow
Strong and loud enough to blow?

Then does it come out,
Blow and rush and shout,
Till it has to stay,
Weary, weary, far away?

Oh, it must be so,
For when no winds blow,
Often in the trees
I can see that little breeze!

I WONDER!

I WONDER if the stars are fire,
Or if the stars are gold,
And if a little one should drop,
'T would burn my hand to hold?

THE NEW MOON

DEAR little moon that came last night, I thought
that you would be
All hurt and spoiled—I saw you caught and
tangled in a tree.

But here you are again and so you safely got
away.
I hope you 're learning, little moon, out in the
sky to stay!

FAMILIES

Oh, darling birdies in the nest, your beaks are big
and wide;
I should not think one mother could for all of you
provide.

But little fishes are much worse, for, father said
to-day,
A thousand eggs or more a fish at any time can lay.

How *does* she feed her children when they come
out from the eggs,
And swim around her faster far than if they ran
on legs?

TO A PICTURE

You lovely lady in my book,
Who have so very sad a look,
As though a tear were in your eye,
Remember, if you want to cry,
Instead of smiling as you should,
No lady's child is *always* good!

SUN AND MOON

EVERY, every day,
Just in the same way,
The round sun comes back
To begin his shining track.

Why, then, must the night
Get its silvery light
From a moon that's new
Every other week or two?

THE TYPEWRITER

It talks and talks but not the words
  It writes so clear and black;
It writes my name, T-o-m, Tom,
  But says just *Tick*, *tick*, *tack*.

It 's quite unlike the telephone,
  Which does not chatter so,
But kindly calls for us to hear
  The things we need to know.

Now the fire is getting low,
Come, lay the paper down
Where it will not blaze away
But shrivel black and brown.

Watch now for the soldier-boys
As slow the edges burn:
Regiments of shining sparks—
See them march and turn.

See the mountain that they climb!
How fast they wheel and run!
How they hurry! Out they go!
The battle-play is done.

HORSE-CHESTNUTS

HURRY, chestnuts, smooth and brown,
Crack your burrs and tumble down
In the grass, and roll about
Till I come to hunt you out!

As you are not soft and sweet,
Like the chestnuts good to eat,
You are fit, grown people say,
Only to be thrown away.

But you're handsomer at least,
And I 'm glad that man and beast,
Finding food like meat and oats,
Leave you in your satiny coats.

I will fill a box with you,
Keep you all the winter through,
And discover, by and by,
Games to play at, you and I.

THE NEW DOLL

My Aunty says, "You never had
So fine a dolly; you 'll be glad
To give the other one away
To some poor little girl some day."

O Aunty, would you part with me
If you a finer child should see,
With longer hair and better dressed?
Could you pretend to love her best?

ROBIN-FOOD

I ALWAYS thought the robins were
  Good parents, kind and sweet,
Until I saw one give its young
  A worm instead of meat.

Or can it be they really like—
  The old and young ones, too—
Things that we never could endure
  If fed to me and you?

Perhaps the little robins think
  Our parents are not good,
Because they give us bread and cake
  Instead of robin-food.

THE SHADOW

THE shadow of a bird upon the grass!
Watch, or you will not see it pass—
So sudden, oh, so small and swift and light,
The shadow of a swallow's flight!

The little blades of grass cannot, as I,
See what is happening in the sky,
But when the shadow touches them they say,
The swallows are a-wing to-day!

POPPY BOATS

Poppy petals — soft as silk,
Red as cherries, white as milk.

Shake the bowl and see them drop
On the polished table-top.

That 's the water where they float,
Red and white ones, each a boat.

Now we blow them, softly blow—
Slipping, dipping, see them go!

THE FLYING SEEDS

White and tiny, here and there,
Floating softly in the air—

Oh, what are they? Seeds, you say,
Winged to travel far away.

But they seem, in the sunshine,
Feathers very small and fine;

And though fairies, as we know,
Never in the daytime show,

They may let us see, perhaps,
Just the feathers in their caps.

AT BEDTIME

DARLING, *my darling!* — It was mother singing low,
And I heard the little fishes through the water come and go;
I saw the little tree-leaves fluttering in the sky,
Green amid the blueness where the little clouds go by.

There are many, many darlings for the mothers far and wide,
But my only mother sings to me, to me and none beside;
I shut my eyes to hear her and she sings me far away,
I open them to see her and I know what she will say:

Darling, my darling! — I was down among the grass,
The clover-blossoms nodded, so the daisies let me pass;
I was up among the tree-tops and flying with a bird,
But when he sang his song for me, 't was *Darling* that I heard.

THE STARS IN TOWN

At the seashore last week they showed me the
stars,
And taught me the names of a few,
And the patterns they made, with their spangles
of gold,
On a sky that was darker than blue.

When we strolled after supper to-night in the
Park,
As I sometimes may do for a treat,
The very same stars — oh, I jumped with sur-
prise —
Shone high over housetop and street.

The Dipper was there, and the zigzag-y Chair,
And the Star of the North looking down.
— At the seashore, I wonder, what shines in the
place
Of the stars that have moved into town?

THE WHISPERING PINE TREE

Old pine, you whisper like the waves,
Yet you have only seen
The other trees and flowers and hills,
And meadows grassy green.

Your brothers near the sea have heard
The whispering, I suppose,
And taught their neighbors, and so on,
Till every pine tree knows.

THE ORGAN-GRINDER

All day long his food he earns
Dragging his heavy cart about,
And, hard at work, the crank he turns
To let the music out.

We pull wagons in our play,
And in our play we sing and drum,
So he for pleasure, I dare say,
Spells words and does a sum.

MANNERS

I HAVE an uncle I don't like,
An aunt I cannot bear:
She chucks me underneath the chin,
He ruffles up my hair.

Another uncle I adore,
Another aunty, too:
She shakes me kindly by the hand,
He says, How do you do?

THE SCHOOLBOY

I AM not one who hates his school—
  I like too many boys,
And even the teachers, as a rule,
  Are persons one enjoys.

But certain people make me hate
  To talk of school, for they
Behave as though they must some great
  Astonishment display;

Or call me "little man," or try
  To make it seem a jest
To ask if scholars big as I
  Know Greek or Latin best.

I am not big, but I can go
  To school and do my task—
And be polite to people who
  Unpleasant questions ask.

THE CAT IN THE CORNFIELD

Just now I met it once again,
The lion without cage or chain,
Prowling about in a thick wood,
Growling and looking for its food.
Yellow it was, as it should be:
It stood and gazed and gazed at me,
Arched its back, opened its jaws,
And stretched its many pointed claws,
With just the very dangerous look
Of lions in my Daniel book.
It tried to catch me, but I could
Escape from it in the thick wood,
Or jump and shout and make it quail,
Crouch and crawl and lash its tail!

BOBBY'S HUNTING-GROUND

As orchards are for growing fruit,
You may not guess how well they suit
A hunter of big game who cares
To meet with Indians most, or bears.

With trusty gun, high in a tree
I watch, a furry beast to see,
While on a branch I sit astride
And far and fast I ride and ride.

Or under the stone wall I lie
Amid the goldenrod, to spy
If stealthy comes a brave or two,
And plan what then I ought to do.

And if no braves or bears appear,
That proves they keep away through fear;
They hear my horse, they dread my gun,
And turn their backs and run and run!

A VOYAGE ON THE LAWN

WATCH now a bold discoverer,
Just setting sail from Spain
To find America and bring
Great treasures home again.

My goat-cart is my gallant ship,
And if it sometimes goes
Too fast, perhaps, it is because
A stormy tempest blows.

But have no fear, though shrubs
and trees
Are islands hard to pass,
For people come alive again
Who only drown in grass!

A CITY BOY

I AM a little city child,
And glad that it is so;
The country is too white and wild
In winter with the snow.

I love it in the summer days,
But when the trees are brown
And chilly winds blow many ways,
I hurry back to town.

My home is waiting, full of toys,
The streets are full of men,
And I can use with other boys
My roller-skates again.

Here, if the weather storms and snows,
I cannot come to harm;
It 's very different, goodness knows,
With children on a farm.

A STORMY DAY

I LOOK out through the window, where
The world is wet and wild,
And fancy I am wandering there,
A lost and dripping child.

That makes it pleasant when I turn
And find I am myself,
With food to eat, and wood to burn,
And toys upon the shelf.

Or else, a shipwrecked sailor-boy,
Upon the rug I lie,
And thankfully the fire enjoy
Until my clothes are dry.

Or sometimes, when a deluge falls,
At Noah's Ark I play,
And being all the animals
Gives me a busy day.

HOME FROM THE COUNTRY

I'm back in town, and I rejoice
To lie in bed awake,
While passing feet a pleasant noise
Upon the pavement make.

The whistles greet me from afar
Of boats upon the bay,
The bell of an electric car,
An auto's sudden bray.

Then sounds and signals as I lie
Grow dreamy in my head;
But if the firemen thunder by,
How can I stay in bed?

GOING TO SLEEP

TUCKED in bed but wide awake,
A little journey then I take,
Here and there where I have been,
To see the things that I have seen:

Pleasant things in summer places,
And streets of people, funny faces,
Fountains dancing in the Square
To yellow tulips planted there.

Though my eyes are shut up tight,
And in my room is darkest night,
Toy-shop windows I can see,
The swing beneath the maple tree,

Towers we built upon the beach
Beyond the creeping water's reach,
Flowers in grandma's garden growing,
The flag above the schoolhouse blowing.

Clear at first, at last they seem
All mixed and misty like a dream;
Sudden comes the morning light—
I must have been awake all night!

THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT

My little box of shining blue,
I hardly can believe that you,
With feet of gold so bright and fine—
That you are really, truly mine.

My father said, while mother smiled,
You were no present for a child —
Much more, of course, I would enjoy
A picture-book or else a toy.

O little box of gold and blue,
And lined inside with satin, too,
How strange it is they do not know
The reasons why I love you so:

Because you 're pretty and, still more,
Because I never had before,
Or dreamed that Christmas-time could
bring,
For me, for *me*, a grown-up thing!

DOLLY'S LULLABY

Sing, I must sing to my dear dolly, sing,
And tell her the stories of everything.
She is tired of my singing just "Sleep, dear, sleep,"
She is tired of the songs about Little Bo-Peep,
Jack Horner, Miss Muffet, and all of the rhymes
I have sung from my picture-book dozens of times.
Sing, I must sing to my dear dolly, sing,
And tell her the stories of everything!

Slumber, my dolly! I 'll tell you to-night
Of trees that are blossoming rosy and white;
Of brooks where the ripples of brown water run
And tinkle like music and shine in the sun;
Of nests where the baby birds sit in a heap,
And the mother sits over them when they 're asleep.
Sing, I must sing to my dear dolly, sing,
And tell her the stories of everything!

The summer is green and the winter is white,
There is sunshine by day and star-shine at night;
The stars are so many it cannot be told,
The moon is of silver but they are of gold;

The clouds are like ships and the sky like the sea,
Only turned upside down over dolly and me.
Sing, I must sing to my dear dolly, sing,
But I never can tell her of everything!

AT A HIGH WINDOW

HERE is my lofty watch-tower where
I see the things of earth and air.

I see the clouds that bring the rain,
Their shadows on the fields of grain,

The cloaks they lay upon the breast
Of hill and mountain at the west.

Beyond the hills I see the sun
Grow large and red when day is done;

The moon I see, quite small and new,
A curving line upon the blue;

And down the valley, now and again,
Far, far away, a railroad train,

By day a trail of smoke, by night
A little moving line of light.

Far, far away, I think, in it
How many men and women sit,

All rushing on and on to come
To their own town and happy home,

Where they may like some day to see
A train go by that 's carrying *me*.

BY THE SHORE

WHEN tired of building forts and walls and ditching them about,
I sit upon the sand and watch the tide flow in or out.

And always at the edge are waves, always, though there may be
No ripples on the water near, no tossing out at sea.

They may be little, little waves, perhaps an inch in height,
Yet they can rise and curl and fall and plash as big ones might.

Just as one dies another comes, and always more
and more,
While ever runs their whispering voice along the
quiet shore.

At night when all is hid away in darkness, still I
know
They curl and break, and up and down their little
distance go.

And even in winter, I am sure, when I am far
away,
There 's surf upon the beach or else my little
waves at play.

FLITTER, flitter, Darning-needle! Who 's afraid
of you,
Though you are so thin and sharp, so steely-bright
and blue,
Though you come and go so quickly with a buzz-
ing noise,
Quite as though you meant to worry timid girls
and boys.

Flitter, flitter, Darning-needle! Oh, I know you
are
Only hunting flies for supper, hunting near and
far—
For I don't believe the gardener when he says he
fears
That a Darning-needle sometimes sews up chil-
dren's ears!

THE CAVE BY THE SEA

Among the great rocks at the end of the beach
There is a great cave that I never can reach,
Nor should any boy who is smaller than I
Climb up, as I do, to look over and spy
The tide flowing in or the tide flowing out,
And crabs in the kelp, perhaps, scuttling about!

For once I discovered, deep down in a place
Near the mouth of the cave, what I thought was
a face

Looking up through the water, and watched it to
know
If it moved or the tide only made it seem so.
But the waving of hair I was sure I had seen—
At least if the hair of a mermaid is green.

SNOW IN THE CITY

WINTER, winter, here again!
Soon you 'll rage with might and main!
Soon the flurries of the snow
Whirling through the streets will go,
Or, perhaps, the livelong night
Down will come the flakes of white
Straight and softly everywhere
Through the cold and quiet air,
Covering all the silent street
Smoothly with a spotless sheet.

Then, alas, will people come
In and out of house and home—
People, horses, autos, all
Trampling down the white snow-fall,
Men to shovel it all day,
Carts to carry it away.

Oh, if *we* were flakes of snow,
I would beg the wind to blow
Far across the river, far,
Where the hills and valleys are,
Where, beyond the towns and homes,
Never any person comes.

There the sparkling whiteness may
Lie unspoiled for many a day,
Only patterned by the track
Of a rabbit scurrying back
To his burrow, or a bear
Hunting near his hidden lair—
Sparkling, shining, till the sun
Wakes the green things one by one,
And the snow-flakes melt to be
Springtime drink for flower and tree.

A SAD FANCY

Suppose Columbus had not sailed the sea!
Then all the grandfathers of you and me
In foreign countries would have had to stay,
Instead of setting forth to drive away
The Indians first, the British later on,
And change King George for General Washington.

And you and I, of course, would have been born
In some strange place abroad to mope and mourn,
To have no country of our own but be
Just English, Dutch, or Irish; never see
The flying Stars and Stripes, and take no trips
To Europe ever in the big steamships.

HARRY AND THE INDIANS

You say corn-stalks piled together,
Drying in the autumn weather;
I say Indians, many a row,
Where the corn-stalks used to grow —
Leaves and tassels changed to be
Blankets, feathers, plain to see.

Indian chieftains seated round,
Cold and ragged, on the ground,
Rustling, talking — never a one
Sees me creeping with my gun,
As they crept when 't was their joy
Our forefathers to destroy.

Maybe — who can tell us now? —
As he walked behind his plough
In this very field, a dart
Pierced a pale-face to the heart,
Or a captured child was borne,
Shrieking, through the rows of corn.

Yet it seems a shame for me,
Now they sit so mournfully,
Cold and ragged, bent and brown —
Shame for me to shoot them down.
And suppose, when it was done,
Hiawatha should be one!

BARBARA'S TREASURE-SHIP

Oh, sailor-men and sailor-boys, far, far away at sea,
Fill up your ship with curious toys and foreign things for me!

Bring me a branch of coral white, and shells all pink inside,
And amber beads they say you find on beaches at low tide.

Bring me the scarves and golden shoes that Persian ladies wear,
With emerald rings, and pearls in strings to twist up in my hair;

A big macaw, all red and blue, a small green parrakeet —
And do be careful, sailor-boys, when stormy winds you meet!

Then if you're tired of voyaging when at my gate you stop,
I 'll give you new-laid eggs, and cakes with icing on the top.

OFTEN by myself I play,
For my brother, strange to say,
Does not like the things he ought
Or have patience to be taught.

Never will he search with me
For the cave where we should see
Crooked little gnomes come out,
Or a faun to frisk about.

He will not believe when I
Show where fairies danced, or try
Underneath the ferns to find
One that has been left behind.

Seldom will he even be
With Columbus on the sea,
Or with a Crusader band
Spurring to the Holy Land.

Sleds he likes, and skates and swings,
Bats and balls and shooting things,
And he laughs whenever I say
He does not know how to *play*.

THE FOREST OF THE CORN

BETWEEN the tasseled rows I run
And hide from people and the sun;
They roof me in and shut away
The world I live in every day.

They rustle like a forest tall
Where orchids grow and parrots call,
Or like the swish on marble stairs
Of silken skirts a princess wears.

And when I tire of listening, then
I turn around and round again —
So fast and oft, I do not know
Which way I came, which way to go.

I cry, *I'm lost*, *I'm lost!* and fear
There is some lurking danger near;
Swiftly I run and run, and then
I reach the open world again.

I love to shudder and pretend
A wilderness without an end,
And find it only is the corn
Quite near the house where I was born.

JOE-PYE WEED

I WONDER who Joe Pye may be that owns the purple weed.
I've watched it slowly blossom, slowly fade, and go to seed;

But I have had no word or sign that Joe Pye ever came
To see the purple blooming of the plant that bears his name.

'T is very handsome — it may be he stays away, Joe Pye,
Because he hates to have it called a weed when he is by.

Of course the farmers scoff at it and say it does no good;
They only care for things that serve for men or beasts as food.

But if they'd look at it for once, would really stop and *look*,
And see it growing tall and thick beside the hidden brook,

With golden-rod all mingled in and wreaths of
virgin's-bower,
Perhaps they would not laugh at me for calling
it a flower.

I hope, though, that Joe Pye may come in blos-
soming-time next year,
For who he is and where he got his plant I long
to hear.

MARY'S APPLE TREE

They 've cut it down since I was here
In the warm summer-time last year;
They 've cut it down, the apple tree
That really did belong to me!

It did not stand, my apple tree,
In any orchard company,
But in a garden large and square
With pleasant pathways everywhere.

The paths are edged with rows of box,
The birds come there in busy flocks,
And lovely flowers as summer passes,
And parsley-beds and ribbon-grasses.

Always this garden was for me
The Garden of the Apple Tree,
For there its strong and leafy boughs
Had made for me a pleasure-house.

High up they held, yet not too high,
Hidden from every passing eye
In the green shadow cool and sweet,
A true and comfortable seat.

One branch was large to sit upon,
And then there was a smaller one
That ran quite straight and properly
To make a sofa-back for me.

I loved to climb into my seat,
And sit at ease and swing my feet,
And there my knitting-work I took,
A story-paper, or a book.

I loved to sit there and to find
Strange fancies coming to my mind,
As though the whispering leaves might be
Repeating fairy poetry.

It was my apple tree, my own,
Because I knew, and I alone,
That it had shaped itself to be
A playhouse for a child like me.

The men that killed it could not know
I loved my tree so much — but oh!
Why did they cut it down? And how,
How *can* I do without it now?

THE SICK CHILD

I

The Aquarium

I DO not care to see the toys
A child when it is well enjoys,
Or speak when mother stoops to say
I 'm better now than yesterday.

It tires me even when she talks;
I wonder how she stands and walks;
I cannot turn myself in bed,
Or use my spoon, or lift my head.

The pinks and roses that she brings
Please me to look at, but the things
That do the most to comfort me
My father put where I can see.

There in the water, through the glass,
I watch the goldfish float and pass
Among the plants and creeping snails,
And gently move their golden tails.

They float, they swim, here by my bed,
But make no sound to pain my head,
The golden fish that silently
Wave the green plants to comfort me.

II

Getting Well

Long weeks I lived in mother's bed,
Or on the sofa, but to-day,
"Stand up, my girl," the doctor said,
"And walk a little way."

As slowly then I moved around,
I felt astonishingly tall,
And in the glass a face I found
Too white for mine and small.

Then, holding by the window-sill,
How great the change that met my eye! —
Such thick green leaves when I fell ill,
And now so few and dry.

As far as to the library
To-morrow I may walk, and there
Wait for my dinner pleasantly
In father's easy chair.

WHAT KATHERINE WISHED FOR

WHAT are we going to be
When we get to be women and men—
Jennie and Florence and me,
Johnnie and Peter and Ben?

It is a game to play,
But I hardly can play with the rest,
For they try to persuade me to say
I wish for what *they* think the best.

I wish only to look
Like Juno or Helen of Troy,
Write a wonderful poetry-book,
And have five little girls and a boy.

WHAT NORA IMAGINED

In from the sea to the bay
(When I am not a child any more)
A ship may come sailing some day
As I sit on a rock by the shore.

In from the ship to the beach
The sailors will come in a boat,
And finding me there within reach,
Will capture and bear me afloat.

Out of the harbor's mouth
I shall sail at the turn of the tide,
Off to the isles of the south
With a pirate chief as his bride!

THE PROCESSION

Soldiers march, a band of music plays its finest
tune,
But there 's something better still that must be
coming soon.

Now I hear it, far away yet — hear it as it comes
Nearer, nearer, up the street — the sound of fifes
and drums!

Oh, there is no other noise that 's half so brave
and gay,
Or that makes your heart beat so and takes your
breath away.

Drum, you drummers! Fife, you fifers! How I
wish I could
March behind you into battle as a soldier should!

Drum, you drummers! Roll your thunder, loud
and louder still!
Fife, you fifers! Fife and whistle, high and clear
and shrill!

If I hardly keep the tears back, 't is not only I —
Any one must laugh and shout or he would have
to cry!

AUTUMN LEAVES

Oh, the rustle of the dead leaves,
Yellow, russet, brown, and red leaves!
All night long the storm-wind blew them,
Shook them from the trees to strew them
Where the children's feet can go
Tramping, trampling, to and fro.

Oh, the wind, the stormy fellow!
How he blew them, brown and yellow,
Red and russet, hither, thither,
Like the flakes in wintry weather,
So we might tramp to and fro
In the leaves as in the snow.

Forward march, then! Follow, follow!
March along here in the hollow,
Where the piles knee-deep are lying,
Kick and toss and send them flying.
Hear them crackle as we go,
Tramping, trampling, to and fro!

SPRING IN THE CITY

Oh, the spring comes very quickly when it really means to come,
And we soon forget the long delays that were so wearisome.

The gusty rains, the dusty winds, have blown themselves away;
The breeze is soft as summer-time and warmer every day;

And the flags that top the houses all along the Avenue
Seem twice as gay because the sky is such a shining blue.

Out in the Park the winter-buds, that safe on every bough
Kept from the cold the baby leaves, are bursting open now.

The maple-trees and elms are hung with fringes green or red—
The tasseled flowers that come before the leaves have time to spread.

There are bushes golden yellow, there are bushes
frothy white,
That were only budding yesterday but blossomed
overnight.

And by hundreds and by thousands dandelions
will star the grass,
Till the scent of the first cutting fills the sunshine
as we pass.

THE ALL-YEAR CROP

It is springtime in the Park and a million flowers
are out;
There are tulips, there are daffodils, and pansies
all about.

But however bright the blossoming and sweet the
green may be,
All round the year the babies are the sweetest
things I see.

In their go-carts and their basket-wagons all the paths they fill,
Unless it 's really raining or is snowing harder still.

They are so very many, it seems strange who owns them all,
Yet sometimes there 's a family, like ours, with none at all.

O mother, do you know the plan, and think it would succeed,
To coax the friendly stork who brings the babies people need?

With his present in a kerchief, safely knotted in his bill,
Will he fly to any window where there 's sugar on the sill?

THE SURF

A STORM, a storm, has blown at sea!
The waves it made roll up to me
And break upon the rocks and sand,
Making a splendid shouting noise,
As to the green and quiet land
They call with loud and louder voice,
A storm, a storm far out at sea,
A storm, a storm, a storm at sea!

All that my sailor friends have said
Who live and travel on the sea,
All that in books I ever read,
Or learned in my geography,
Of ships and ports and foreign men,
Of distant lands and wondrous sights,
Of pirates and of old sea-fights,
The surf repeats it all again
And cries, *A storm far out at sea,*
A storm, a storm, a storm at sea!

HELENA'S BOOK

Some day I mean to write a book,
And never let a person look
At any page or word or line
Till it is printed clear and fine,
Till in the bookstore it is piled,
And parents buy it for their child.

It shall be made of verses all,
Of different poems, large and small,
And no one shall the writing see
Because I want my book to be
My own entirely, from my heart.
There I shall rhyme and set apart,
In poetry-pictures, this and that
That children love or wonder at,
That children do, or want to do,
Believe, or wish was coming true.

Oh, many are the books that hold
Beautiful poems that were told
By men and women, so that we
May read and happy children be.
But only one on all our shelves,
I think, tells of the children's selves,
From end to end, in such a way
We might have written it at our play.

I mean the one, the "Garden" one,
Of Robert Louis Stevenson.

This is so very true and good,
I 'm almost sure I never should
Have thought to write another one,
If Robert Louis Stevenson
Had put in all the things I see
And all the thoughts that come to me.
When *he* was young he was a boy,
And there are things that girls enjoy,
Things that they think or like to play,
That the "Garden" children do not say.

I cannot try to do it now —
I must be older to know how
To choose a word, to match a rhyme,
To make the lines keep perfect time.
But of my book in bed at night
I think, and plan to make it right,
And in my memory store away
Important things I want to say.

O Robert Louis Stevenson,
If, when my little book is done,
There is a child of any age,
And anywhere, who finds a page

That gives such pleasure as you give
Wherever little children live,
I shall be proud, and grateful too.
I shall confess I copied you,
And wrote (perhaps not quite so well)
Only what *you* forgot to tell.

A THUNDER-STORM AT NIGHT

Lightning — off there in the south where through the darkness show
Shapes of distant mountain-tops against the sudden glow.

Thunder — very far away but echoing back and forth,
Nearer, nearer coming as the clouds are rolling north.

Wind — how shrill it whistles as it pulls the clouds along,

Pulls and whistles, shrieks and sings a loud and piping song.

Rain — how suddenly it falls, with what a dashing sound,
Like a solid thing, almost, that shatters on the ground.

Lightning in the wind and rain — right here a blinding flash,
Thunder in the rain and wind — just overhead a crash.

Let them rage, all four of them, and roar around the skies;
Soon the morning comes and then a shining sun will rise!

MORNING, AFTER THE STORM

More diamonds than a king has seen
Hang on a million blades of grass;
Like fairy-land the woods are green
Beneath the blue and shining sky,
Where pass and pass
The white clouds softly by.

Loud, loud and merry is the brook
That only murmured yesterday;
The maples have a glittering look,
And all the dark old pines are bright,
On every spray
A jewel-drop of light.

I love the lovely world that wakes
Out of the storm so smilingly,
And yet I sorrow for their sakes—
The nest that perished in the rain,
The broken tree,
The field of beaten grain.

THE VIOLIN

FAR, far, and high and clear,
Oh, I could hear
An angel sing as he began —
As he, the man
Who played to us, first touched the strings
And moved the bow that says so many things.
Far in the sky
The angel sang, so softly and so high,
So faintly clear,
I held my breath to hear.

Then soon
The music grew to be a little plashing tune
Like rain that dropped
On summer leaves. And when it stopped—
The little plashing tune
Like gentle rain upon the leaves in June—
It was because
The violin had other things to tell
That, while it spoke, I understood as well.
Now I forget, excepting that there was
An ending when
The angel came to sing again —
Oh, very soft and high —
A sweet and far-away good-bye.

THE LIGHTHOUSE STAR

In at my open window a star,
More bold and bright than the planets are,
Shines to my pillow — now dimly shows
Through the cloudy white as the curtain blows
In the breath of the wind, now darts its gold
Straight as a spear and as bright and bold.

On the long coast north, on the long coast south,
At the harbor's heart and the harbor's mouth,
Guarding the edge of the pine-grown land,
Warning away from the spits of sand,
A star of the reef or an island star —
Many the brothers of my light are.

The Lord did not station them there to show
The ships of the sea where their pathways go.
With a loving heart and a patient hand,
It was *men* that lifted them up to stand
Darting their beams to the ocean's rim,
To watch for the sailor and counsel him.

But the Lord gives thanks to the men, I am sure,
Who thought of the stars that can make secure
The path of His children at sea in the night,
Who builded their towers and kindled their
light —

Hundreds of others and my great star,
As steady and sure as the planets are!

A SUMMER DREAM

In the night I left my bed
To follow where the moonbeams led;
And the night-wind and the moon
They led me on, and showed me soon
In the woods a hidden nook,
While they whispered, *Look, oh, look!*

Fairies, fairies dancing there
With waving hands and blowing hair,
Scarves of cobweb, swords of grass—
I saw them meet and turn and pass
In a ring of firefly light,
Fairy folk of the summer night.

Then the moonbeams led and led,
And, hearing what the night-wind said,
Left I looked, and looked to right,
And saw another wondrous sight,
Seldom seen and seldom told—
Pygmies, kobolds, digging gold.

And once more the night-wind cried,
Oh, harken well on every side!
And the forest seemed to be
All full of things I could not see,
Calling, singing, *Come, oh, come!*
As the moonbeams led me home.

AT THE END OF THE SUMMER

WHAT whispers, whispers, in the hollow
Where the leaning birch tree grows?
What bids me come, what bids me follow,
When the wind at twilight blows?
Not the wind and not the tree—
Something else is calling me.

I hear it when the rain is dropping
On the bushes; in the stream
It murmurs, murmurs without stopping,
Like the river of a dream;
And I seem to hear it sing
Wherever birds are on the wing.

It must be Summer, calling, calling!
For the cold is drawing near,

The frost is biting, leaves are falling,
So she calls for me to hear:

I am flying south, and you,
If you will, come too, come too!

THE HUNTER OF THE SKIES

THERE he shines, Orion, splendid in the night,
With the two great stars that make his shoulders bright,
One that 's like a buckle worn upon his knee,
And a glittering sword-belt where the stars are three.

Hunter is Orion, huntress is the moon,
But he hunts all winter, she grows weary soon.
When she comes again and waxes brave and bright,
She will find Orion has not missed a night.

Once, late in the summer, from my bed I crept
Wondering what the world was doing while I slept,
And I saw the Hunter rising from the sea,
Shoulder-stars and belt and star upon his knee.

Up from the sea-water slow I watched him come;
All the other stars moved on to give him room;
The great Bull he hunted kept a space ahead,
And the Dog Star followed where the Hunter led.

Then on the sea-water, smooth and almost black,
Trembled here and there a tiny golden track;
That was where Orion sprinkled down the light
Of the stars he carried, climbing up the night.

When at last I turned and stole back to my bed,
Low down in the east the sky was growing red.
Oh, you great Orion! your chase that night was done —
Even the great Hunter flees before the sun!

WHEN PAN PLAYS HIS PIPES

Oh, I know, I know the way
That, when Pan begins to play,
Trooping come from far and near
All the things that want to hear!

Birches twinkle by the river,
Swallows flash on slanted wing,
Thrushes, with their hearts a-quiver,
Shut their throats and dare not sing.

Wild-fowl come with hurried flocking
Where the wild god pipeth shrill,
Sedges, in the river rocking,
To the rapid motion thrill.

Tiny furry creatures linger,
Stretch round eyes and stare to see
How the honeysuckle's finger
Marks the measure daintily.

Lazy moths forget their sleeping,
Lizards glitter as they run—
Dancing, flying, fluttering, creeping,
Come the wild folk every one.

From the fields, the woods, the hollows,
Rocky clefts, and river's brim,
Every little live thing follows
Hornèd Pan who pipes to him.

ALONG the banks of the smooth brown brooks,
Where the birches lean and the grape-vine swings,
By the river pools, in the forest nooks,
On the garden paths at night,
On the sea-beach at twilight,
I have looked, I have longed, for the Unseen Things:

For the nymph of the hills and the water-sprite,
For the faun and the dryad of woodland ways,
For the tiny ones met in a fairy rite—
All the sweet wild folk of old,
That we know from stories told
By the poets and singers of far-off days.

In their own old time they were not unseen—
The hunter, the shepherd, the wandering boy,
Might chance on the places where they had been
At rest in the shade by day,
In the dawn or dusk at play,
And know them by signs of an innocent joy:

By the trodden grass, by a withering wreath
Of white narcissus, an unstrung bow,
Or a flute, perhaps, that was dropped beneath

A laurel bush carelessly,
Or the broken twigs of a tree
Where a bather had swung to the stream below.

And once in a lifetime, perchance, in a place
All stillness and beauty and strangeness, he met
With one of the Wonderful face to face—
With one who had strayed away
From the sport of the rest or lay,
Though they had awakened, in slumber yet.

Oh, surely to-day they are not all gone;
They are few, they are shy, but are not all dead;
In the wild-wood I shall have glimpse of one,
If only a flutter of white
Far off in the dim green light,
And the flying hair of a golden head!

THE END

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